

## SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY  
DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

SPAIN AND CUBA—OUR NATIONAL DUTY  
TO OURSELVES.

From the N. Y. Herald.

What is to be the attitude of the United States with reference to Cuba and Spain? This is a question not only of vital interest to North America, but to the whole of South America. Expediency and self-protection enter largely into our national views of the subject. Much of the future progress of fifteen republics and the fate of one empire hang upon the wisdom of our action. What is Cuba? It is a great natural fortification, unequalled as a base of operations for European powers against any country in the New World. It is not only self-supporting, but so rich that it gives thirty-three million dollars of revenue to the decrepit monarchy that dominates it. From this military and naval base have been launched nearly all the expeditions which have struck at the mainland since Hernando Cortez invaded Mexico in 1519. From 1810 to 1820 it served for the complete desolation of every Spanish-American country on the continent. Havana was the rendezvous for the English, French, and Spanish expedition against Mexico during our civil war. Again it became at once the purse and the stronghold of the Spanish fleet under Admiral Nunez for the desolation of the Pacific coast of South America and the late barbaric bombardment of Valparaiso.

Were the movement of the world eastward instead of westward, how long would Europe permit us to hold a fortified island in the English Channel, or on the like Gibraltar, the entrance of the Mediterranean? And yet this is an inferior comparison to what Cuba is to this continent; inferior even to what Cuba is with reference to our own Atlantic coast and our Mississippi valley.

No national or international laws can be laid down to cover questions which are born of progress and the times. National expediency becomes the irresistible lever forcing national action. It is so in the history of our great mother England, and were there space, we might make a tour around the world and point out numerous instances of territory seized and held by her in spite of treaties. In the history of nations honor and force are synonymous; for force is the result of great progress; great progress is honor. If a nation, progressing beyond its fellows, finds itself cramped and threatened by one of retrograde tendencies, it becomes not only expedient, but right, to sweep away the obstacle, be it a fortification, an island, or both. It is this which not only our progress but that of the continent calls upon us to do with reference to Cuba as held by Spain. It is upon this broad ground we would announce to Spain that she can no longer cover our coast with her guns. We would not make war under a petty subterfuge, for the game at which we shoot lies higher. We are great enough and strong enough to frankly acknowledge our necessities. Let us not disgrace ourselves by descending to the European method of covering up a great national objective point under the smoke of a pistol shot, the seizure of a vessel, or the confiscation of a contraband cargo of war material. All these should be secondary, not primary, causes of war in the Cuban question. As secondary causes they are powerful. The seizure of two men from the deck of an American vessel, the Lizzie Majors, while on the high seas, is a parallel case with that of our Trent difficulty with England. It is a sufficient cause of war if Spain refuses reparation and apology. But in declaring war we would announce the higher reason we have mentioned.

How well Cuba may serve to make war against us is best shown by the constant warfare indirectly waged upon us from Havana after the Spanish concession of belligerent rights to the "Confederate" Rebels. Can Secretary Fish be so puerile as to now make a proposition to the country to purchase Cuba, when shot and shell were rained upon us from that fortification for four years? Who would lower his national dignity by paying hard cash for a four years' insult? "Negotiate with Spain for Cuba!" Where is President or Cabinet that dares propose it? How long since our people began to wonder, and finally to pay for the privilege? Mr. Fish thinks that "it will be more economical" to buy instead of to make war for the acquisition of the island; that "war with Spain, coupled with England and France, would involve us in vast outlays, and require new and great sacrifices from our people, who already suffer quite enough." "Economy" at the expense of national degradation! What splendid stuff this Premier is made of that he hints at such a thing? Is this the material of which our new Cabinet is composed? Doubtless the large fleet now concentrating in Cuban waters for the purpose of protecting the island for Spain until the negotiations for its purchase may be concluded. In the now pending question of the Alabama claims with England we advise our British rivals to take the hint that the great republic has already become so decrepit that "economy" is the keynote of national action. We are even ready to pay for the favor done to us by the English pirates, and any order drawn upon us by England will be honored at sight.

Now is the moment for the evacuation of a national policy. The United States in 1800 were an uneducated chaos of localisms. Our war set the particles in motion, and like gravitated towards like all over the country. When Richmond fell we found ourselves, for the first time, a nation. The work has heretofore been almost entirely internal. We have ignored external issues and continental questions. We have been absolutely without a foreign policy; and in the lack of this we have caused the countries to the south of us numberless revolutions, with attendant misfortunes to them and to ourselves. We are bold, therefore, to advocate that the time has come for us to look beyond our own frontiers. The Cuban question is of the first importance to the whole continent. Others must quickly follow in its train; for up to this time everything has been ignored. He who has not travelled to the southward has but little idea how the Spanish American republics hang upon our motions. When we grasp Cuba we shall send them twenty years ahead in the orbit of republicanism. We ourselves shall then be doubly compact, and our power for offensive and defensive war be indefinitely increased.

## INLAND REVENUE CHARGES.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

An examination of our reports on public finance must satisfy every one that it is beginning to cost us an enormous penny to collect our internal revenue. If we keep on at the present rate, it cannot be long before Congress will be called on to give about one-fourth of the revenue for securing the rest of it, and we shall quite equal Great Britain, which has not the best reputation for economy of government, and whose Parliament is annually treated, on the opening of the budget, to the item of "£5,000,000 for revenue collection." One of the notable features in this case is, that as the revenue goes down yearly, the cost of collecting it goes up—a fact which has

been somewhat explained upon the ground that, as the total revenue diminishes, the ratio of cost to it must necessarily increase. But the logic of this explanation only holds good so long as the amount of cost annually remains at the same level, which it has by no means done. The official records show that in the fiscal year 1866 the net receipts from this source amounted in the aggregate to over \$300,000,000, upon which there were expenses reaching to \$7,699,700, or 2.49 per cent of the total receipts—a percentage of cost which elicited expressions of admiration in the British House of Commons at the time. In 1867, however, upon net receipts footing up about 263½ millions, the collection expenses amounted to \$8,982,686, or 3.41 per cent, and in 1868, upon \$188,750,000, they were \$9,327,301, or 4.94 per cent. Now, if there was anything in the theory of decrease of revenue working increase in ratio of collection cost, so offered in the case, the total expenses of 1867 and 1868 should have exceeded \$7,600,000 in either year, whereas they did exceed that sum by over \$1,250,000 in the one year, and \$1,600,000 in the other, respectively. We see, then, the somewhat remarkable fact that it actually cost us \$1,000,000 more to collect \$189,000,000 last year than it did to collect \$310,000,000 in 1866, a year of higher prices generally throughout the country. This is scarcely creditable to the efficiency and economy of management at the Internal Revenue headquarters at Washington, and the matter should receive attention. We admit that Mr. Rollins' explanation in his last report, advancing the theory already alluded to, will hold good up to a certain point, but beyond that it fails to the ground. We can understand, for instance, that although a certain amount of taxation is thrown off, the number of districts and sub-districts, together with the general force, must remain the same, or pretty nearly so. But there must be a turning point somewhere. It is useless to affirm that the same force is necessary to collect any revenue, however much reduced. Can none out of the multitude of assistant assessors, deputy collectors, and other officials, be spared? What has become of the large force which was necessitated by the tax on manufactures, now that Congress has exempted them to the extent of some sixty millions? We have not heard of any extensive discharge from the service, such as we were justified in expecting. Mr. Schenck assured us last spring that a large reduction would be made; but so far as we know, the matter ended. It is to be apprehended that the persons whose services were done away with by the exemption were assigned to some other merely nominal duty. We cordially invite Commissioner Delano to make an investigation, and ascertain if these collection expenses cannot be largely reduced, as a matter of justice to tax-payers. They certainly ought to be; for if we could put \$300,000,000 into the Treasury for \$7,600,000 three years ago, we should be able to put \$189,000,000 there for the same sum now; and we think this would be the common sense view of almost every one.

## GENERAL CHARACTER OF GENERAL GRANT'S APPOINTMENTS TO OFFICE.

From the N. Y. Times.

We concur in the main with what our Washington correspondent said recently of General Grant's appointments to office. In general they have been good—such as commend themselves to the approval of the country by the fitness of the men appointed and the influences that have controlled their selection. Mistakes have unquestionably been made, but they are few and far between, and have mainly occurred in cases where the President has yielded to the pressure of politicians. We believe, too, that they have been, and will continue to be, promptly corrected when discovered.

It may be true that the percentage of bad appointments would have been still smaller than it is "if people had been as ready to furnish President Grant with correct information about candidates in advance of their nomination as they were to do so after appointment." But it must be remembered that the country was assured, at a very early date, that advice was not wanted, and that people who volunteered it would injure rather than improve their standing with the administration. And as it is, we imagine General Grant has had a good deal more of "information" concerning candidates for nomination than he has known how to dispose of. We think he has been a good deal embarrassed by the fact that the moment any man was suggested for office, his character, public and private, was assailed from every quarter, and every possible effort was made to compass his defeat, mainly, of course, in the interest of his rivals. It has not been so much from lack of information concerning candidates for office, as from inability to decide how much of it was disinterested and reliable, that General Grant has fallen into the mistakes he has made in this respect.

And we venture to say that he has suffered more from members of Congress in this matter than from any other single class. In the first place, they act more uniformly from interested motives than any other class in seeking appointments to office. They care but little for the credit of the administration, and still less for the interests of the country, in the distribution of patronage. Their main object—that to which all other considerations are sacrificed—is their own interest, the securing their own reelection or their own promotion to higher places; and this they seek by getting office for their most devoted and zealous political supporters. This is true of members of Congress as a rule, to which, possibly, there may be exceptions; but if so, they are very rare.

In the next place, members of Congress are reckless and heedless, beyond any other class of people, in signing recommendations for office. They attach not the slightest sense of responsibility to such signatures. They yield to paltrier motives than other men; they are more cowardly and show less manliness and self-respect, when asked to sign, and repudiate the act when done with more shameless hypocrisy, than any other class of the community. It is urged, for example, as an excuse for General Grant's nomination of Mr. Ashley to be Governor of Montana, that he could not resist the application of 150 members of Congress asking him to do so. Yet more than half these members would not hesitate, if they had been asked, to say to General Grant that they signed merely because Mr. Ashley sat among them and asked them to sign, because others were signing, and it would look ungracious to refuse, and they did not for a moment suppose that such an application would amount to anything. Very many of those who did sign the paper have already urged these considerations in extension of their action. Yet the effect of it, whatever may have been its motive, was to lead General Grant into perhaps the very worst nomination he has yet made. And he must bear the responsibility of it. The act is his, and all the explanations, disclaimers, and protestations they can make will not relieve him of its responsibility, or put any part of it on their shoulders.

It is not easy to say how this evil can be remedied, but until it is remedied—until the recommendations, however urgent, of members of Congress, cease to control the action

of the President in making appointments to office—he will continue to make disastrous and disgraceful mistakes in this important branch of the public service. One expedient is open to him; he might, whenever such a list as that of Ashley's backers, for example, is presented to him, select from it the names of half a dozen who are known to him to be disinterested and reliable, and obtain from them all the information in their possession, all the facts bearing on the case, and then require them to assume personally the responsibility of the appointment—to certify, on their official honor and personal character, that it is one which they would themselves make if they had the power. Such a certificate would be worth thousands of simple signatures, given without reflection, and simply as a means of escaping responsibility. Of course, it would involve some trouble; but so momentous and so important a function as that of appointing thousands of public officers throughout the country cannot be entrusted to the performance of it without care. And no trouble taken to ascertain its proper performance ought to be considered needless.

Until we have a settled civil-service system, based upon recognized principles of justice, and governed by fixed rules of administration, we shall be subject to all the evils which we now experience. The President will continue to be crushed with applications, overriden and overruled by members of Congress, and treated, in all respects, as the chief superintendent of a first-class soup-house. The administration will be corrupt and inefficient, the country will be disgraced, and the public government will continue unfavorably with any and with all other forms.

## OFFICE-SEEKING AND A CIVIL SERVICE LAW.

From the N. Y. World.

The discredit which has been attached to the office-seeking scramble for offices which has been raging against General Grant since his inauguration provokes the spleen of some of our contemporaries, who insist that the proper remedy for this intolerable pressure upon the President is to be found in the passage of a civil service bill, like that which has been so persistently advocated by Mr. Jenckes. We have more than once conceded that there would be some advantage—or, rather, some prospect of advantage, as only experience can test the value of such a measure—in the passage of Mr. Jenckes' or some equivalent bill; but we do not see that anything is gained by overrating its possible good consequences. To say that, if it had been a law, it would have precluded the disgraceful scramble that we have lately been witnessing in Washington, is such a display of nonsense and irrelevance as could be made only by writers whose vague and flighty enthusiasm has not permitted them to give any exact attention to the subject. Mr. Jenckes' bill would have included none of the eleven hundred offices for which General Grant has already sent in nominations to the Senate. We should have witnessed precisely the same discredit and scramble with the bill enacted into law, as we have witnessed without it. Mr. Jenckes' civil service bill, as any one may see by reading it, and as its author has frequently explained in addresses to public meetings, applies to no officers whose appointment requires confirmation by the Senate. But the prodigious huddle of applicants by which the new President has been besieged and overborne, have been applicants for offices of precisely this description; for offices which no man can fill until after he has passed the ordeal of the Senate.

If it be asked why a civil service law might not be passed including all the offices of the Government, as well as those inferior offices who are appointed by the heads of departments, and do not require confirmation by the Senate, the reply is, that grave doubts are entertained whether such a law would not be in conflict with the Constitution. This is the reason given by Mr. Jenckes for including within the scope of his bill only the Washington clerkships and such like inferior offices. The language of the Constitution applicable to the subject is, that the President "shall nominate, and by and with the advice of the Senate shall appoint, ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law; but Congress may by law invest the appointment of such inferior officers as they think proper in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments." A civil service law would operate as a restraint upon the appointing power; and Congress has no right to impose a restraint or curtail a power which is conferred upon the President and Senate in full measure by the Constitution. In those cases where the Constitution authorizes Congress to invest the appointment in the President alone or the head of a department, it may of course prescribe the conditions which must be observed to make the appointment valid; but it cannot abridge any authority which has been fully conferred by the Constitution itself. If a law should be passed requiring a candidate for the Chief Justiceship to be examined like a law student, applying for admission to the bar, and the President disregarding so absurd a law, should fill a vacancy in that high office by sending to the Senate the name of an eminent lawyer who had not passed such an examination, and the Senate should confirm him, we suppose nobody can doubt that he would be fully entitled to discharge the duties of the office. If a quo warranto were issued, it would be sufficient to show that the officer had been nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, the presenting every title to the office which the Constitution requires. The same reasoning will apply to every officer whose appointment is vested in the President and Senate.

Now, it ought to be evident to everybody who has even a slight acquaintance with public affairs, that a civil service law which applied only to petty clerkships and such like inferior offices, would be a futile remedy for the great mania of office-seeking which breaks out at the advent of every new administration. These inferior offices are the prizes which attract such jostling multitudes of eager aspirants to Washington. So long as all the officers who are appointed by the President and Senate are changed every four years, all the chief evils of the present system will continue; and they would not be perceptibly mitigated by putting the clerks and other inferior subordinates through an examination and making their places permanent. It is absurd to expect John and James to be cured by administering a dose of medicine to Peter. The enthusiasts for a civil service law must not expect it to remedy any evils which are not included in its scope. It is not the Washington clerkships, the subordinate places in the custom-houses, and other offices of that kind, which make our political contests so fierce and so sordid; it is the offices to which a civil service act would not apply—the foreign missions and consulars, the collectors of customs and internal revenue, the marshals and district attorneys, the postmasters, the officers of the Territories; in short, those in filling which the Senate has a joint voice with the President. A civil service bill would not reach the offices which are the source of nearly all the mischief.

Even if a civil service act could be made to apply to the higher offices without violating the Constitution, it would be absurd to put the applicants for such offices through a competitive examination. No man is fit for an important office who has not acquired such a standing and reputation in the community in which he lives as should be a sufficient guarantee of his capacity to discharge its duties. And, in point of fact, our civil officers seldom fail for want of the requisite intellectual ability and knowledge. The cause of the service is lack of integrity, lack of fidelity, lack of diligence and attention to official duties. The most scandalously mismanaged branch of the public service is the collection of the revenue; but the collectors, as a general rule, are capable enough; the trouble is that they are rather too clever and dextrous, being able to circumvent the law and outwit their superiors, in their pursuit of dishonest gains. Probably none of them, on their entrance into office, would have had any difficulty in passing an examination to test their capacity, but unfortunately honesty can be ascertained by no such summary method. Neither for high offices nor for low offices are there any other tests of integrity than previous good character and actual trial. The proposed scheme of reform must, therefore, break down in practice at the very point where it is most important that it should be strong. In this country, where education is universal, there is never any difficulty in finding men intellectually qualified for the subordinate offices of the Government; offices whose duties are, for the most part, very simple. But in offices where there are opportunities for peculation, there is always more or less danger, that the incumbents will not be proof against temptation; and we are unable to see that any system of examinations will furnish security on this vital point.

It is no doubt a great and corrupting evil that all the offices of the country should be degraded into prizes to be scrambled for, every four years, by selfish politicians and greedy adventurers; but it is not the Washington clerkships and petty post offices in small country towns that render our politicians so sordid and unscrupulous. No project of reform can be of much value unless it reaches the offices to which a civil service bill would not apply. When somebody will devise a law that will lay the axe at the root of the tree, instead of merely lopping off some of the smaller branches, we shall be glad to support it by a zealous advocacy; but seeing that Mr. Jenckes' bill would touch none of the changes which President Grant has been so industriously making for the last three weeks, there is not much sense in crying it up as a remedy.

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Has just received exquisite specimens of  
ART, SUITABLE FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS.  
FINE DRESDEN "ENAMELS" ON PORCELAIN, IN GREAT VARIETY.  
SPLENDID PAINTED PHOTOGRAPHS, Including a Number of Choice Gems.  
A SUPERB LINE OF CHROMOS.  
A large assortment of NEW ENGRAVINGS, ETC.  
Also, RICH STYLES FRAMES, of elegant new patterns. 3 1

**LEGAL NOTICES.**  
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA.  
HOPPER vs. HOPPER. June Term, 1869. No. 42.  
William W. Hopper, Sir:—You will please name a rule in the above case, to allow cause, if any you have, why a divorce a vinculo should not be decreed, as a personal service on you having failed, on account of your absence, Returnable on SATURDAY, April 21, 1869, at 10 o'clock A. M. Yours, etc.,  
JOSEPH A. BONHAM,  
Attorney for Plaintiff.

IN THE ORPHANS' COURT FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA.  
Estate of C. E. DORVILLE vs. McCANN.  
The Auditor appointed by the Court to audit, settle, and adjust the final account of JOHN C. E. McCANN, Esq., Guardian of C. E. DORVILLE (G. E. McCANN), dec'd, becoming of age January 16, A. D. 1868, and to report distribution of the balance in the hands of the said McCANN, will meet the parties interested, for the purpose of his appointment, on FRIDAY, April 23, A. D. 1869, at four o'clock P. M., at the office of John H. Colahan, Esq., No. 324 WALNUT Street, in the city of Philadelphia.  
4 20 1m  
WILLIAM C. BAKER, Auditor.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA.  
Petition of ELIZA STEINMETZ for privilege of a Female.  
Notice is hereby given that application will be made to said Court on SATURDAY, April 24, 1869, for a decree permitting said ELIZA STEINMETZ to do business as a Female sole trader under the act of Assembly of Pennsylvania, when all persons desiring to oppose the same will be heard.  
4 10 20¢  
Attorney for Petitioner.

**CLOTHS, CASSIMERES, ETC.**  
**JAMES S. LEE,**  
No. 21 NORTH SECOND STREET,  
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Are now receiving an ENTIRE NEW STOCK of  
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Superintendent.